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LABOR REFORM TRACT.

THE

GREAT LABOR PROBLEM SOLVED.

LABOR AND CAPITAL
WORKING IN EQUITY AND HARMONY.

A POWERFUL ARGUMENT.

7575.38

EVERYBODY SHOULD READ IT.

BY

EUGENE HUTCHINSON.

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LABOR REFORM TRACT.

THE following dialogue is based on the supposition that the thirty-five million laborers of the United States have vacated the country, leaving the five million capitalists with three fourths of all their property vacant and unoccupied, and also that there is an intelligent foreign people of the same number, waiting on the unoccupied territories for permission to come and occupy this vacated property, provided they can do so upon just and equitable terms.

I have written this argument in this form because it is so much easier to study a moral or ethical principle disconnected from all personal interests and entanglements.

LABORER TO CAPITALIST.

SIR: Before proceeding to business, I think I had better define my Moral and Political Position. They being one and the same, one definition will answer for both.

I believe in the equal brotherhood of man, attended with all its logical conclusions; consequently I affirm that all interest-taking, with its natural co-operators, viz., high rents, large per cent. by manufacturers, &c., &c., is a crime, as it is a direct violation of each man's equal opportunity to obtain a living. Now, sir, having defined my position, I will proceed.

I represent thirty-five million of industrious and intelligent people, who are waiting on the unoccupied territories for a chance to come in among you and occupy your beautiful lands, houses, factories, machine shops, &c., which are now unoccupied, and which you can not use. Will you permit us to come and have the full products of our labor, by merely paying you the damage resulting to you by their use?

Capitalist. Certainly not. We came here first, and accumulated all this property, and are entitled to pay for its use; and certainly it must be a great privilege to your people to come into such beautiful possessions, which they will be more than willing to pay for.

Laborer. I admit it would be a great privilege for us to come, but it would also be a favor to you to have us come and occupy your property, which you ought not to overlook in fixing your price. But how much pay do you demand?

Capitalist. In order that we may have an accurate understanding of each other, I will make a mathematical calculation. An official estimate of all our property gives us thirty-two billion in round num-

bers, twenty billion of which is idle and unoccupied. Since the war we have received as good as ten per cent. for it all; that is, it has averaged that after paying for all repairs. Now, Mr. Laborer, this is the lowest price for its future occupancy.

Laborer. I will also make some mathematical calculations, based on the prices of *labor* since the war. We have thirty-five million men, women, and children. Allowing twelve million to be able to earn two dollars and one fourth per day each, the round sum would be about eight billion a year, or for three hundred days, which, I think, is a fair estimate of the work that could be done. Now, the interest on twenty billion one year is two billion, or two thousand million, being one fourth of all our people could earn.

Now, Mr. Capitalist, your terms we can never comply with. To do so would reduce us all to slavery, and we are determined to be free.

Capitalist. You seem to ignore and entirely overlook the moral principles upon which we base our claim; which are, first, that property, being of money value to him that uses it, entitles the owner of it to such value or, in other words, that benefits conferred, which pecuniarily enable the receiver to enrich himself, are justly entitled to a compensation exactly equal to that pecuniary help, for certainly we are under no obligation to enrich others. The whole civilized and Christian world holds that we are under no moral or religious obligation to be guided in our busi-

ness transactions in the least by the rules of morality and religion, they being ethical and spiritual, not material and practical. Thus we stand justified by the highest business morality of Christendom; and, furthermore, since the war we have doubled our entire capital, an increase of sixteen billion, which was, and must have been paid, to us by our laborers in rents, profits, and interest, as they were the only producers of wealth. Thus you see that we must have had ten per cent. for all our rented property in order to have received so large an increase; and certainly a more happy people did not exist on the earth than they were.

Laborer. They were duped by your false teaching, and so they quietly submitted to your unrighteous, inhuman, and enslaving exactions. But *we* are determined to be free, at all hazards. And now, Mr. Capitalist, I shall endeavor to show what you call your Moral Principle, upon which you base your demands, and justify your civilization, is as *false as Hell, and cruel as Death.* Let me analyze it. It is a demand made upon your poor suffering brother, that he deliver to you, for favors bestowed, that cost you nothing pecuniarily to confer, just because they will be pecuniarily advantageous to him, an amount of his hard-earned means of living equal to the benefit received, even if it be a yielding himself a slave for life; for many a man would do even that for the privilege of saving himself and family from starvation. Now,

this is the moral principle of taking interest. Nothing more, nothing less; thus showing itself a monster indeed!

It is a practical denial of the principles of the Christian religion. It is an outrage upon the highest and most beautiful sentiments of all noble souls. There is no pleasure so great, no happiness so serene, as the consciousness of conferring great happiness upon humanity. There is no other act on which common humanity looks with so much admiration, as attested by the universal homage of the world, paid to those who have devoted their lives to the good of mankind, and it is felt to be the highest duty to alleviate distress and confer happiness when possible, and to be unmanly, mean, and criminal in any one to neglect so to do. This false idea is also the great justifying cause of all the slaveries in the world; for in the human soul, uninfluenced by false ideas, the principles of justice and equity stand foremost, and are exacting and imperative in their demands, never yielding to any other claim, but demanding first justice, then pity and benevolence. It is upon this false idea of pecuniary and practical justice that a subtle tissue of fallacious sophistry has been ingeniously woven together and called Political Science — a more proper name for which would be *Political Jugglery!*

I will further illustrate this wicked principle. The Christian millionnaire watches every case of pecuniary distress, and does his best to make such trades with

the poor sufferers as to get their property into his own hands at the lowest per cent. possible, which he often does even at one fourth its real value, while his wealthy brother, governed by the principles of justice and equity, seeks out just such cases of distress, and proffers his aid by lending to the sufferers money free from interest, thus saving them from all loss, and in this manner diffusing happiness wherever he goes. The first capitalist justifies his course by the supposition that his poor victims are better off than they would have been had the trade not been made. Such cruel acts are not the exceptions, but are fair specimens of all the business transactions of the world.

Capitalist. You seem to be quite well satisfied that you have the best of the argument, and that I am proved a criminal; which I admit, reasoning from your premises, for you deny that I have presented any true moral principle. I acknowledge I have no brotherhood morals. Mine are of a higher and more powerful kind. They are of that type that has, and still does enable a one hundredth part of the civilized world to own and control all which the ninety-nine should have in justice.

Now, this is extremely gratifying to all the business world, and I conscientiously believe the principles upon which this vast business is being done are exactly right, as no complaint has ever been made by the religion of civilization. These principles are, first, *Take care of yourself.* Let nothing divert you from

this unalterable purpose. Adhere strictly to this principle, and you are sure of success. No other is reliable. This has stood the test of ages, and never yet has failed. Those who have adhered most strictly to this grandest of all rules have grown the richest.

The other principles being auxiliaries to this great pivotal one, I will merely present some of their settled rules and codes of honor. Never allow yourselves to be swerved from strict fidelity to this first duty of self-preservation by the suffering condition of others. Watch every opportunity for a big strike, or two hundred per cent. profit. The greatest honor is to be called smart, and many more of similar import.

Now, Mr. Laborer, this being a government of the people by the people, established and maintained by a majority vote, if you will come and abide the decision of a fair political contest, you may come, and I will risk my chance for my price, for capital always has won, and I believe always will, and the business morality will continue to reign supreme.

Laborer. I accept your terms, relying, undoubtingly, on the justice of our demand for our success.

I will now present my plan for future operations, and methods of its accomplishment.

By conversation, tracts, reform papers, and lectures, we shall educate the whole people into a correct knowledge of the principles of real practical liberty, and the equal brotherhood of man, with his inalienable right to exact equity in his pursuit of the means

of pecuniary support; and shall also show the non-capitalists, or laborers, that they are now the pecuniary slaves of the capitalist, and endeavor to make them see the meanness of longer submission. We shall also show them that they, being in numbers as seven to one, have abundant power in their own hands to emancipate themselves, and that, too, as soon as they can put the right men into Congress. It will be asked how we, after getting into power, are going to make the capitalist rent his property, or lend his money, for any less than he now does. I reply, it can be very easily done, and that, too, without infringing on his rights, and compel him to respect ours, which he never yet has done. We shall at once wind up the national banks, call in all the greenbacks, and, in their stead, issue a similar money, to take its place, free from interest, of about the same purchasing and paying power, one dollar being represented permanently by the products of five hours of the average farm labor of this country, one dollar being now paid for five hours' work: this free money will be based on the credit and products of the whole country, and by our proper officers distributed throughout the land, we shall loan the laborers all the money they can give security for, thus freeing them from the money power of the capitalist, and giving them the power to build their own houses and shops, if the capitalist does not at once reduce his rents to an equitable price, which price would be such a sum as would fully compensate

for all the wear and tear, and natural decay, resulting to the property during its occupancy. But the question may be asked, will the capitalist accede to such a reduction from his present prices? I answer, yes, for he would readily see that an equitable price for the use of his property would be much better than to let it stand unoccupied.

It will doubtless be said that all enterprise will cease, for the capitalist will take his money to Europe and loan it there. I answer, our freedom would create such an excitement among the foreign laborers, that the capitalist would have as much as he could attend to to take care of his own capital, without borrowing ours; and as for enterprise ceasing, it would be greatly increased, for the capitalist, not having any use for his money, would rush into manufacturing and farming, and try his hand in competition with the world, thus giving every laborer all the work he could do, thereby creating a great abundance of everything to make him comfortable and happy.

To my Brother Laborers.

If you have carefully read the preceding pages, and believe the statements there made, which I affirm to be substantially true, you must see that you are now in a terrible pecuniary slavery; that you have actually had taken from you by the capitalist, yearly, for twelve years, as I have already proved, one thousand million

of your hard-earned money, the larger share of which was taken in interest and rents, and the remainder in profits, fares, &c., which he had no moral right to take.

You must also have seen that you have abundant political power, if you would only unite yourselves together to compel the capitalist, to almost at once cease his unjust exactions, and that, too, by a method both easy and just; it being merely taking the circulating money out of the hands of private corporations, who charge the people exorbitant rates of interest, and supplying its place with a free money, which money would not wrong the capitalist, while it would bless the laborer incalculably.

EUGENE HUTCHINSON.

REED'S FERRY, N. H., Jan. 22, 1873.

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